

Worth Noting

CRS Reviews Unified Command Plan

In mid-July, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) published a report about the Armed Forces' Unified Command Plan (UCP) and the Combatant Commands (COCOMs). The report details the history, mission, and operational considerations of the nine COCOMs, which include:

- U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM),
- U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM),
- U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM),
- U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM),
- U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM),
- U.S. European Command (USEUCOM),
- U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM),
- U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM),
- U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM).

The report also includes a brief discussion of current issues associated with the UCP and these commands, as well as potential issues for Congress, such as the implications of a strategic shift to the Asia-Pacific region and the need for greater interagency involvement in the UCP. Other potential issues include whether the Geographical COCOMs military engagement activities have made U.S. foreign policy “too militarized,” and whether the current nine COCOMs should be realigned or expanded to address emerging alignments and threats, including cyber warfare. CRS also proposes alternative organizational structures, should Congress find the present COCOM construct does not meet contemporary and future needs. **IAJ**

Proposed Legislation to Reform SES

New legislation has been introduced to Congress that is aimed at reforming the Senior Executive Service (SES). The legislation was introduced by Representative Jim Moran (D-VA), and is co-sponsored by Representatives Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).

The Senior Executive Service Act of 2012 includes reforms that address compensation, professional development, and the SES ratings system, all reforms that are meant to improve working conditions for the SES. Supporters of the bill believe that several concerns, including work/life balance, pay compression, and change in geographic relocation, have deterred individuals from remaining in the SES. The bill's supporters also believe that the reforms outlined in the Senior Executive Service Act would ensure that agencies and departments are able to develop talented individuals within government as well as attract talent from outside government.

The Senior Executive Service Act of 2012 would improve work/life balance for SES employees, as well as enable the SES to recruit the best and brightest candidates to high-level civil service. The proposed legislation would improve SES career management and compensation, reform SES hiring processes, and increase diversity within the SES. **IAJ**